



U.S. Department of Justice
Office of the Attorney General

PROJECT **SAFE** CHILDHOOD

Protecting Children from
Online Exploitation and Abuse

"Our nation has made this commitment: Anyone who targets a child for harm will be a primary target of law enforcement. That's our commitment. Anyone who takes the life or innocence of a child will be punished to the full extent of the law."

President George W. Bush, October 23, 2002



"We cannot, and we will not, tolerate those who seek to abuse or exploit our children."

Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales, April 20, 2006



U.S. Department of Justice

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May 2006

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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

May 2, 2006

Our Nation's children are a precious gift and a source of great hope for our future, and we have a responsibility to help them realize their full potential. In order to build a nurturing society that provides a safe, supportive environment for our young people, we must work together to combat the dangers that threaten their well-being. Internet predators and child pornography are profound evils that exploit children, shatter lives, and rob youth of their innocence.

My Administration is committed to protecting our children from abuse and exploitation by online predators. To help achieve this important goal, Attorney General Alberto Gonzales and the Department of Justice are launching Project Safe Childhood, an initiative that will coordinate Federal, State, and local law enforcement efforts to prosecute predators and rescue their victims. Through cooperation with legal and community partners, this initiative will help bring criminals to justice and protect the most vulnerable members of our society.

I appreciate all those who are fighting for the lives and the dignity of innocent children. Your good work protects our Nation's young people and reflects the compassionate spirit of America.

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The Attorney General
Washington, D.C.

May 17, 2006



Dear Project Safe Childhood Partner:

The Internet is an important and powerful resource that can enrich the lives of all Americans. But it also poses new and evolving dangers to our children, who are increasingly targeted online by sexual predators, or are sexually abused by those producing pornographic images to share widely through the Internet or other communications technology. President Bush has emphasized our commitment to seeking out and prosecuting anyone who targets a child for sexual exploitation. And, as Attorney General, I have made it one of the highest priorities of the Department of Justice to protect children from this computer-facilitated sexual abuse and exploitation.

On February 15th of this year, I announced Project Safe Childhood, a Department initiative aimed at preventing the abuse and exploitation of kids through the Internet. Today, we formally begin the process of implementing Project Safe Childhood. This publication will guide that process, describing the goals and design of the initiative and giving direction to law enforcement and our other partners in this fight to protect children.

The Department, working with a number of federal, state, and local partners, has already accomplished a great deal in this area. Investigators and prosecutors are focused on these cases in U.S. Attorneys' offices throughout the nation, the Criminal Division's Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section, and the FBI's Innocent Images Unit and field offices. Through the Office of Justice Programs, we fund a number of enforcement, prevention, and victim-recovery programs that impact local communities for the benefit of children. One such initiative is the Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) program, a national network of 46 task forces consisting of federal, state, and local law enforcement personnel dedicated to this issue. The ICAC task forces have been protecting America's children since 1998, and they are key partners in Project Safe Childhood.

The Department of Justice cannot address this problem alone. Federal investigators in the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, and the U.S. Secret Service will provide critical help. Our tremendous partnership with the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children has been and will continue to be a key part of this effort. And Project Safe Childhood can be successful only through coordinated participation

by state and local law enforcement, community prevention and education programs, victim and parental groups, and other non-profit groups and individuals invested in this worthy cause. Private businesses, especially those involved in the Internet and telecommunications industries, are encouraged to support law enforcement efforts. Down to every last parent, teacher, and mentor in America, we all must do our part to ensure that the Internet is not turned against our children through the evils of sexual enticement, abuse, and child pornography.

Sexual predators, abusers, and pornographers who target the most innocent and vulnerable of our society—our children—will be relentlessly targeted and prosecuted by the Department of Justice. This guide gives you the tools and information you need to understand Project Safe Childhood and to become involved in the effort to protect America's children.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "A. R. Gonzales", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Alberto R. Gonzales

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